

# Welcome to the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC

## Voluntary Service

This booklet is designed to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) volunteer driver in carrying out assigned duties more effectively. This booklet provides you with an overview of your role and responsibilities as a volunteer driver with the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center.

VA volunteers are valuable members of the medical center team, functioning under the direct supervision of a staff member. Volunteers do not replace paid personnel, but will perform many useful services that are beyond the scope of the regular staff.

For whatever reason an individual decides to volunteer at the VA medical center - whether for school credits, community service, practical work experience, or a sense of patriotism and respect of this nation's Veterans - the rewards for such service are endless. Volunteers are our greatest patient advocates, providing program support and a wealth of new and innovative ideas.

As a VA volunteer, you will have the opportunity to provide necessary and worthwhile assistance to the patients and staff. You can also gain valuable experience, a deeper consciousness of the responsibility of helping others and the satisfaction such service brings.

The information included on the following pages is designed to assist you in becoming familiar with the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Voluntary Service and your assignment.

Thank you for your service.

***Fred Lesinski***

Chief, Voluntary Service

Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center

843-789-7230, email [VHACHAVAVS@va.gov](mailto:VHACHAVAVS@va.gov)

# RALPH H. JOHNSON



Ralph H. Johnson was born January 11, 1949, in Charleston, South Carolina. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve at Oakland, California, March 23, 1967, and was discharged to enlist in the Regular Marine Corps, July 2, 1967.

In January 1968, he arrived in the Republic of Vietnam, and served as a Reconnaissance Scout with Company "A", 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division (REIN), FMF. In early morning hours of March 5, 1968, during Operation ROCK, PFC Johnson was a member of a fifteen-man reconnaissance patrol manning an observation post on Hill 146 overlooking the Quan Duc Valley deep in enemy controlled territory.

They were attacked by a platoon-size hostile force employing automatic weapons, satchel charges and hand grenades. Suddenly, a hand grenade landed in the three-man fighting hole occupied by PFC Johnson and two fellow marines. Realizing the inherent danger to his two comrades, he shouted a warning and unhesitatingly hurled himself upon the explosive device. When the grenade exploded, PFC Johnson absorbed the tremendous impact of the blast and was killed instantly. His prompt and heroic act saved the life of one marine at the cost of his own and undoubtedly prevented the enemy from penetrating his sector of the patrol's perimeter.

In view of the above, PFC Johnson was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. Other medals and decorations included: the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Vietnamese Military Merit Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Civil Actions First Class and Good Conduct Marine Corps.

## **YOU AS A VA VOLUNTEER**

The following section is designed to provide you with the basic information you will need to begin (or continue) your volunteer assignment. Please take time to read each item. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Volunteer Transportation Coordinator or any Voluntary Service staff member. We are here to assist you in your assignment so that you may achieve the best results in helping America's Veterans.

### **ROLE**

As a regular-scheduled (RS) volunteer, you are a member of the VA medical center team and have an invaluable role in its mission. Individuals who volunteer their time and efforts through the VAVS program are supplemental to the essential VA personnel at the medical center. Specifically, VA policy states that volunteers in the VA medical center programs are assigned for the purpose of supplementing, not replacing, the VA staff for augmenting program activities in accordance with the needs identified at each medical center.

### **AUTHORIZATION**

Volunteers who agree to serve on an approved RS assignment will be officially authorized to serve on a "without compensation" basis. To be an RS volunteer, the official VAVS representative of your organization and/or the Chief, Voluntary Service must certify you.

NOTE: Many of our volunteers are not affiliated with VAVS service organizations. Many volunteers are recruited through other community resources such as local schools and churches, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

### **ORIENTATION**

The brief orientation presentation is designed to familiarize you generally with the VA medical center, Voluntary Service and your role as a volunteer. This orientation includes general information about several volunteer responsibilities and benefits. Specific assignment orientation varies in length and is under the direction of the respective medical center supervisor who will inform you of matters pertaining to your assignment area. Specific instructions about the various safety issues, like fire and infection control procedures, will be discussed during orientation.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

The Voluntary Service staff is responsible for making all volunteer assignments commensurate with the current medical center needs and the qualifications of the individual volunteer. Volunteer abilities, skills, interests and career goals are taken into consideration when volunteer assignments are made.

If, after a fair trial, (usually a 30-day period) and adequate on-the-job-training, you find you are unhappy with the assignment, please discuss the matter with Voluntary Service staff. If possible, an appropriate assignment will be found for you in another area.

## **GIFTS and DONATIONS**

The Chief, Voluntary Service or designee is responsible for coordinating the acceptance and acknowledgment of all gifts and donations offered to the medical center. These gifts and donations will be used for the sole purpose of meeting particular needs and requirements for the welfare and comfort of the patients. Some of the more popular donated items include magazine subscriptions for the patient library, quilted items such as lap robes, blankets, etc. Additionally, donated funds fully support the patient welfare program and several other services and activities that enhance and expand federally supported healthcare services.

All equipment items donated to the medical center become the property of the United States Government.

Officials and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs will not solicit gifts or donations or authorize the name of the VA to be used by individuals or organizations or the authorize name of anyone in the VA to be used for this purpose. This does not preclude discussion of appropriateness with an individual offering a gift.

A complete list of routine material donation needs and monetary donation accounts is available upon request from the Voluntary Service Office.

The DAV Transportation Network is designed to provide transportation services to Veterans in need of medical care facilities and who have no other means of transportation.

DAV transportation drivers are volunteers who drive a government vehicle, originally donated by the Disabled American Veterans Service Organization, to be used to transport Veterans.

## **VOLUNTEER TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

1. **PURPOSE:** To define the policy and procedures governing the operation of the Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) program and its chief component, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation Network, for the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center.
2. **POLICY:** The Ralph H Johnson VA Medical Center, Charleston, SC, will attempt to refer outpatients/veterans in need of transportation to VA appointment sites to the DAV Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) or other applicable transportation coordinator (County Veterans Service Officers [CVSOs], etc). VTN drivers are regularly scheduled volunteers whose assignment is specifically stated as providing transportation to Veterans in the community.
3. **ACTION:**
  - A. Volunteer Transportation Network drivers must complete the following initial requirements before they are approved to drive:
    - 1) Sign the waiver of compensation on the VA Form 10-7055, application for Voluntary Service.
    - 2) Possess a valid state driver's license; provide proof of insurance (Current automobile insurance or personal liability insurance), and have a safe driving record. A copy of a valid state driver's license and proof of insurance will be required initially from all new volunteer drivers and every year thereafter.
    - 3) Complete a health screening as outlined in VHA Directive 2004-040 *Clearance of Volunteers for Driving Assignments*. Employee Health Physician will review all health screenings and give medical clearance to drive. Referrals may be made for more extensive follow-up before authorization to drive is given. Health screening will be completed initially for all new volunteer drivers and every four years thereafter. Volunteer drivers will report any changes in their health condition (or after any major medical events) to the Employee Health Physician.
    - 4) Complete an approved driver's training course provided by VA and the VA Medical Center. Driver's training will be conducted or completed initially for all new volunteer drivers, and yearly thereafter.
    - 5) Complete an orientation program with the Chief, Voluntary Service or designee and the HSC.
    - 6) New volunteer drivers will complete a ride along with an experienced driver on their first trip and will, on the return trip, drive under the supervision of the experienced driver to ensure the new driver is able to safely handle the vehicle.
    - 7) Report any traffic accidents, changes in their driving record, automobile

insurance, or health status to their transportation coordinator (DAV HSC). The HSC will contact the Chief, Voluntary Service with the information.

8) Wear VA photo ID badge at all times, and wear identifying apparel as appropriate to identify themselves as volunteers for the Volunteer Transportation Network.

9) Strictly adhere to all requirements outlined in this policy, their volunteer position description, and VHA Handbook 1620.2. Non-compliance will be cause for termination of their VTN assignment.

B. Vehicle Operation Requirements:

1) Vans will only be used for the purpose of transporting Veterans to and from clinical appointments. Any volunteer who willfully uses or authorizes the use of such vehicle for other than official purposes is subject to suspension or removal from VTN.

2) VTN drivers will not leave passengers unattended or the vehicle unsecured.

3) All VTN drivers and passengers are required to wear seat belts at all times. Seat belt extenders are available through the engineering office.

4) All occupants are prohibited from smoking in the vehicle.

5) All VTN vans must have a cellular phone or 2-way radio available for volunteer drivers for communication purposes or in the event of an emergency. In the event of a vehicle accident or medical emergency, VTN drivers will call 911 for assistance. At the earliest convenience, the VTN driver will call the DAV HSC, Chief, Voluntary Service and VA Police Service to report the incident. The driver will refrain from using all hand-held wireless telephones while driving (vehicle is in motion). If a call needs to be made, the volunteer should stop the vehicle in a safe area and make the telephone call. Portable hands-free accessories are NOT acceptable. Other occupants may use wireless telephones while the vehicle is in motion.

6) All equipment carried in vehicles (i.e. shovels, footstools, emergency kits, phones, etc.) will be properly secured or fastened down in the vehicle at all times.

7) Personally owned vehicles (POV) used to transport Veterans must be in good working condition and receive proper maintenance on a regular basis. VTN drivers who utilize their own POV will provide this service without compensation from VA, or the Veteran patient and/or a service organization.

8) Fifteen passenger vans will carry no more than nine total occupants, including the driver. VTN drivers must adhere to the maximum number of occupancy requirement when utilizing 15 passenger vans.

9) VTN drivers will report any instances of passenger misconduct to the Chief, Voluntary Service.

10) VTN drivers who receive a moving vehicle citation will be required to pay the citation fine. If the citation is a first time misdemeanor the volunteer will be suspended from driving for 30 days from the date of infraction and will be required to receive a mandatory drivers training session. If any subsequent offenses occur or first time felony, the volunteer will be terminated from using government vehicles.

C. Information:

- 1) Specific assignments may be made to volunteer drivers by the DAV HSC, or designee, or the Chief, Voluntary Service. VA staff may contact the DAV HSC office when transportation is required. Every attempt will be made by the DAV HSC staff to make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible.
- 2) VTN drivers will provide the names of the Veterans on the manifest to the Beneficiary Travel Clerk upon arrival on station. Veterans utilizing the Volunteer Transportation Network will not be eligible for travel funds.
- 3) VTN drivers are considered “without compensation employees” within the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). Therefore, while they are acting in the scope of their employment, they are afforded the protection of FTCA. This coverage extends only to the period in which they are performing the assignment. For example, a volunteer driver who makes a side trip to the bank or laundry while the Veteran is in the vehicle is not covered. For this reason, it is required that all VTN drivers carry adequate motor vehicle bodily injury liability and property damage, or personal insurance. It is also required that VTN drivers refrain from making side trips while in the performance of their assignment and that they take the most direct route to and from the VA medical facility.
- 4) VTN drivers should provide their hours and miles to the DAV HSC at the VA Medical Center, Charleston, when transporting Veterans. DAV HSC will provide a monthly report to the Chief, Voluntary Service listing the hours of all VTN drivers for the previous month. Voluntary Service will record these hours in the Voluntary Service System (VSS) computer package.
- 5) Voluntary Service will maintain volunteer files on all VTN drivers and establish a mechanism by which volunteer’s credentials, training, and health records can be updated as required. The volunteer files will contain copies of all required documents, training, and VA forms as outlined in this policy. Voluntary Service will also maintain a record of the volunteer’s hours, provide appropriate volunteer recognition for the hours of service contributed and ensure that a Volunteer Position Description is on file and is communicated to the volunteer.

4. REFERENCES:

VHA Directive 2004-040, *Clearance of Volunteers for Driving Assignments*, 7/ 2004  
VHA Handbook 1620.2, *Volunteer Transportation Network* VHA Handbook 1620.2, Appendix E,  
Volunteers Transporting Patients in Cars Owned by Volunteers  
VHA Directive 1620.1, Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Procedures,  
July 19, 2001  
VA Directive 7700, Occupational Safety and Health, July 8, 1998

5. **RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief, Voluntary Service (135) is responsible for the contents of this center policy memorandum.
6. **RESCISSION:** Center policy memorandum OOSR-06-04 dated June 22, 2006

JOHN E. BARILICH, MEW, MBA  
Director

# Requirements and Processing New DAV Drivers



- Fill out volunteer application, PIV form, driver information form, copy of insurance card, driver license and 2<sup>nd</sup> photo ID, and DMV driving record for past 3 years. Turn in to DAV Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC).
- History and Physical, PPD test, and hearing exam scheduled by the Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC).
- Applicant comes to VAMC for orientation, physical and fingerprints. This is driver training trip #1.
- Once you pass the physical, Voluntary Service notifies HSC.
- PIV and badge process – once cleared then...
- Voluntary Service schedules orientation (driver training trip #2)
  - Driver Rules
  - Inappropriate use of vehicle, behavior and communication
  - Telephone availability
  - Passenger rules
  - Issue Shirt
  - Position Description
  - Risk and Sensitivity Level Designation

## **Meet with HSC at end of orientation to review:**

- Review of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Leadership Role
- Eligibility of Veterans needing transportation
- Unique needs of local facility
- Hours
- Local parking regulations and locations
- Check list for van inspection and maintained
- Appropriate use of vehicle
- Key to van
- Schedule
- Set up training with current driver to show new driver route and expectations.



## **RALPH H. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER TRANSPORTATION RULES FOR DAV VAN DRIVERS**

1. Drivers should sign in/out on the volunteer computer and keep the volunteer informed of their location and report as soon as possible to the Hospital Service Coordinator's (HSC) office for instructions on the coordination of patient appointments throughout the day.
2. The telephone on the van should be turned on at all times. It is for emergency use only.
3. In case of an emergency, stop the vehicle, call 911, and stay with the vehicle until help arrives.
4. Drivers may assist patients in and out of vans but are not to lift patients or attend medically to patients.
5. Gas tickets, for DAV vans (not GSA), will be turned in to the HSC on each trip to the VAMC, and mileage logs will be turned in to the HSC on the last trip of the month.
6. Each driver should fill out all passenger listings and trip tickets completely.
7. Drivers will not request or collect tips due to VA regulations.
8. Vans will make every effort to leave the VAMC no later than 3:00 p.m. unless notified of patient appointment delays. Do not leave patients without prior HSC or Voluntary Service approval.
9. Drivers will not go to clinic areas to check the status of a passenger's appointment. They should report to the HSC or Voluntary Service only.
10. Drivers need to treat their passengers with courtesy and respect. Drivers should not give out personal information.
11. Drivers must give each patient a "Van Rider" badge. For each rider that has an appointment 12:00 pm or later an Expedite Sheet must be given. Drivers must collect "Van Rider" badges from patients as they board the van to leave the VAMC.
12. Drivers must check all passengers' picture IDs for identification purposes.
13. Drivers are to ensure each passenger is wearing a seatbelt.
14. At the last pick up point, the driver will contact DAV Coordinator and provide an updated passenger list. Giving coordinators names of Veterans that are added to the list or Veterans that are a no-show.

15. Drivers should not bring any patients to the Charleston VAMC for the Emergency Room.

16. Driver may transport patients on approved routes only.

### **Disciplinary Action Procedures**

If you fail to follow “Transportation Rules for VTN Drivers” you will be subject to the disciplinary actions listed below:

Any action of a volunteer that affects the safety and security of the Veterans will be terminated immediately.

For all other offenses

1. Verbal counseling
2. Written counseling
3. Suspension – 10 days
4. Termination

## **RALPH H. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER TRANSPORTATION RULES FOR PASSENGERS**

1. Passengers should call the Van Transportation Coordinator to schedule a ride **three** working days in advance of their appointment and present their VA ID card to the Van Driver in order to ride the van. (If you do not schedule your ride on the Van, you may be told there is not room on the van).
2. Passengers must wear their “Van Rider” badges visibly on the outside garment at all times during their medical visit at the VAMC.
3. The back seat on the 15 passenger vans **CAN NOT** be used for safety reasons.
4. Passengers will wear seatbelts at all times while riding in the van.
5. Passengers should report directly to their clinic appointments upon arrival at the VAMC. Patients should present their (pink) expedite sheets to the clinic personal making sure that the name and social security number on the sheet is correct. The bottom part of the expedite sheet is for the pharmacy so please tear apart.
6. Passengers are to ride the van only if they have a scheduled appointment at the Charleston VAMC. Also if your appointment is canceled for any reason, **you must notify the DAV coordinator and cancel your Van reservation.** The phone number to call 843- 789-7307. The van CAN NOT schedule a passenger to come to the Emergency Room.
7. It is the responsibility of the passenger to give the coordinator information about all of his appointment times and places. We cannot except appointments later than 1:30 pm.
8. Once appointments are completed, the passenger will report to the DAV Driver in the main lobby for further instructions.
9. Vans will make every effort to leave the VAMC by 3:00 p.m. If for some reason you cannot meet the 3:00 p.m. departure, please try to notify your van driver as soon as possible.
10. If you fail to follow the above rules, you must have the necessary funds to provide your own transportation and/or expenses. You will not hold the DAV or the VAMC responsible.
11. Passengers **should not leave the hospital grounds** unless they have a VA scheduled appointment by an off campus physician.

12. Passengers must treat the driver and their fellow Veteran passengers with courtesy and respect. The Volunteer Driver will keep a log of all Veterans riding the van. and will report any disrespectful actions.
13. The van driver is only permitted to stop the van for rest stops and/or emergencies and to pick up and discharge passengers. Passengers should not request the driver to make side trips to take care of their personal business.
14. Passengers are not permitted to smoke, chew tobacco, drink alcohol, use foul language or bring weapons, drugs or any illegal substance on the van. The van driver will not provide transportation to any Veteran who is intoxicated, abusive or poses a threat to the driver or other passengers on the van. Food or beverages are permitted on the vans, however, you must clean up after yourself.
15. If a patient will be staying for a 28 day treatment, they may have one large suitcase.
16. If there is a change in your appointment and you will not be riding the van, please cancel your ride. If you do not show for your ride, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> no show, you will not be permitted to schedule a ride on the van, it will be space available only.
17. Failure to comply with these rules will result in termination of your privileges.
18. In case of an emergency, please call 911.

I understand and agree to the above conditions

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Signature

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Date

# IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS



## **EMERGENCY:**

911

## **VA MEDICAL CENTER POLICE**

Police Office

Work: (843) 789-7251

## **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER FOR THE DAY (AOD)**

On Call – (843) 577-5011

## **DAV TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR:**

Work: (843) 789-7307

Cell: (843) 568-5923

## **VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

Vicki Johnson, Laurie Ferguson, Voluntary Service Specialists

Work: (843) 789-7230

## **DRIVER INFORMATION**



1. Arrive at origin at least 15 minutes before departure to:  
Start engine, inspect van and prepare log sheet.
2. Inspect Passenger List (Passenger list will be in the mail box if not in the van).
3. Greet each passenger and
  - Confirm he/she has an appointment.
  - Assign each passenger a Van Rider badge and record number on passenger list.
  - Have first time riders read and sign the “Transportation Rules for Passengers”.
4. Depart Clinic for scheduled stops.
5. At last stop, call the DAV Office at (843) 789-7307 with count and names of any patients that are no-shows or add on's.
6. Arrive at Medical Center
  - Provide an expedite sheet for late appointments.
  - Instruct all passengers to meet in main lobby after appointments.
  - Sign driver log book at information desk in main lobby.
  - Check in with DAV office at the hospital.
  - When not taking care of patients, please wait in Driver's Lounge Room S113.
  - At no time are you to call the operator, or go the clinics to find patients. If you need assistance please contact Harriett Hudson or Gayle Taylor.
7. Refuel the Van – use available credit card.
8. Park van at designated area in rear of hospital.
9. Log in on the volunteer computer at the information desk and print a meal ticket.
10. Assemble passengers for return – remember to sign out on drivers log book at the information desk.
11. Please advise DAV and the information desk when ever you are away from the hospital.

## Liability



Transporting Veterans who are seeking a variety of services and benefits to and or from a VA facility or other approved health care provider is an authorized VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service) volunteer assignment.

Volunteer drivers are protected by the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) while they are engaged in the performance of their specific assignment. Deviation from the duties of the assignment could exclude individuals from coverage by FTCA. It is necessary that transportation volunteers do not make side trips while in the performance of their assignment and take the most direct route to and from the VA facility.

Your liability coverage begins when you start the van at the beginning of your trip and ends after all Veterans have been taken to their drop off points and the van has been parked at the end of the trip.

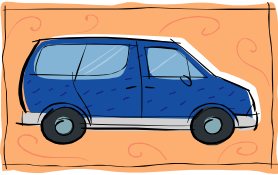

Federal law provides protection to all VA volunteers from claims or suits for personal injuries or death or for property damage so long as the volunteers' actions are part of their Federal duties.

- A. The transportation must be related to an approved VA function and must be considered official VA business.
- B. The volunteer must adhere to practices promoting good vehicle maintenance and safety.
- C. Volunteers may not charge for their services nor receive compensation or payment for the services they provide.

In addition, volunteer drivers must:

- A. Complete a volunteer application.
- B. Receive volunteer specific and driver specific orientation by Voluntary Service and/or the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.
- C. Sign a waiver of compensation.
- D. Provide proof of vehicle liability insurance and have a current driver's license.
- E. Pass a physical examination performed by VA staff. Future physical examinations will be scheduled as needed.
- F. Complete a Motor Vehicle Safety Training by VA staff.

**If you leave the VA grounds in the DAV van to run errands or do personal shopping, your liability coverage will cease while you are on these side trips. Therefore, once you arrive, park the van until you are ready for the return trip home or have been instructed to do otherwise.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use of Government Owned Vehicles</b></p> 	<p>Only certified volunteer drivers operating under the direction of the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator will operate the vehicles. A certified driver is one who is a registered volunteer with Voluntary Service, has received orientation, and who holds a valid state driver's license and vehicle insurance, and who has passed a physical examination and motor vehicle safety training by this medical center.</p> <p>Off-Stationed vans will be stationed at agreed upon secure locations (preferably a local government facility such as a court house). They will be used exclusively to transport patients for scheduled medical center appointments and treatments. Any exceptions to this rule will be rare and must be directed to Voluntary Service for approval. Vans will not be parked in garages unless an agreement has been drawn between the owners of the garage and the VA. Contact Voluntary Service.</p> <p>When transporting Veterans, the DAV van driver is only permitted to stop the van for rest stops and/or emergencies, or to pick up and discharge passengers at designated pick-up points. <b>NO SIDE TRIPS OR PERSONAL ERRANDS ARE PERMITTED.</b></p> <p>The DAV van is not an emergency vehicle. Should the Veteran require immediate emergency transportation, it is recommended that he or she dial 911.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Transportation in the DAV van is offered free of charge to eligible veterans. The volunteer driver is <b>NOT</b> to accept payment and/or tips from any passenger for transportation in the van.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Operation Rules And Procedures</b></p> 	<p>Drivers must obtain prior authorization for all trips from the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator or Chief Voluntary Service.</p> <p>Drivers must take the most direct route to and from the VA while transporting Veterans in order to be considered an "Employee of the Government" for insurance purposes.</p> <p>Each trip is recorded on the Motor Vehicle Trip Log located in the van. Completed log sheets will be given to the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.</p> <p>Drivers must ensure passengers do not exceed the number of available seats and/or seatbelts of the vehicle.</p>



## A stylized icon depicting a rainy day. It features a blue background with white clouds and raindrops. In the foreground, two black silhouettes of people are walking, each carrying a black umbrella. The entire icon is enclosed in a rounded square frame with a blue border.





- The potential of serious injury and the overall safety of passengers and the driver are of utmost importance.
- The van itself. Should there be an accident; the VTN van may require repairs or replacement that may affect the availability of transportation for an extended period of time.



- Call for road and weather reports.
- Based on weather reports, road conditions and weather forecasts, the HSC and driver will use their best judgment in determining whether or not the trip will take place.
- If the trip is to be cancelled, drivers and scheduled passengers will be notified.
- The HSC should contact the Chief, Voluntary Service if the trip is to be cancelled and provide the names of the Veterans/passengers so arrangements can be made to reschedule their appointments. The VA will make every attempt to reschedule their appointments in a timely fashion.

- Contact Voluntary Service on determining whether to start the trip back to home base.
- Contact will be made with the home base. Based on that feedback, along with weather reports, road conditions and weather forecasts, the driver and the VA staff will determine whether or not the scheduled trip will be made.
- If the decision is made that it would not be safe to travel, arrangements will be made for the driver and passengers to lodge overnight or until the weather permits a return trip.

Cigarette smoking is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** in all government owned vehicles as well as in all of the buildings of the VA medical center. This regulation applies to employees, volunteers, patients and visitors. Individuals may smoke **ONLY** in the designated outside smoking areas.

17

<p><b>DAV Van Emergency Items</b></p> 	<p><b>Emergency items in each van include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blank Accident Report Forms</li> <li>A letter of Proof of Government Insurance</li> <li>Cellular phone (not to be used while the vehicle is in motion)</li> <li>Government Credit Card for fuel purchases</li> <li>Inflated/inflatable spare tire and working jack</li> <li>Emergency folder with all forms</li> <li>First Aide kit. Fire extinguisher</li> <li>Blanket</li> </ul> <p>If these items are not in the van or need replacement, contact Voluntary Service personnel. <u>All equipment and loose items will be properly secured or fastened down in the vehicle at all times.</u></p>
<p><b>Upon Arrival at the VA Medical Center</b></p> 	<p>You are a representative of this medical center. Be sure your appearance is neat and clean. Please wear your name badge for identification. The badge can be replaced if worn or lost. Be punctual and dependable.</p> <p>At the last pick up point, drivers are to call HSC at 789-7307 and report patients being transported. HSC will notify appropriate clinic staff with an e-mail group set up to inform all appropriate staff.</p> <p>Veterans can be unloaded at the north entrance to the medical center and the vehicle can be parked in a designated parking lot.</p> <p>Ensure riders understand arrangements regarding the time and place to meet them for the return trip.</p> <p>Drivers will register their time with the DAV office and complete the driver sign in sheet. Report to the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator for any updated information. If you arrive home later than the time you recorded, you can adjust your time on your next visit to the medical center.</p> <p>Just make a separate driver entry on the sign in sheet with the previous date and the additional hours we need to record.</p> <p>Report to the medical center Travel Clerk who is located in the main lobby. Provide the clerk with the names of the Veterans you transported. These Veterans will not be eligible for travel reimbursement. You may also be advised if there is an additional passenger for your return trip.</p>
<p><b>While at the VA Medical Center</b></p>	<p>All drivers who are at the medical center are eligible for either a breakfast or lunch in the VA Cafeteria.</p> <p>During your day at the medical center while the veterans are going through their clinic appointments, there are a number of ways you can spend your time at the medical center:</p>

	<p>A. Patients are your first priority. Be sure your passengers are able to get to their scheduled appointments.</p> <p>B. Shop in the VA Canteen Store or have something to eat.</p>
<p><b>Vehicle Maintenance and Credit Card Purchases</b></p> 	<p>Maintenance of government-owned vehicles will be the responsibility of the VA and will be directed by the Operations Supervisor, Engineering Service at the VA Medical Center. Inspections and maintenance will be under his direction and may warrant temporary removal of the vehicle from service.</p> <p>Credit cards may be used to pay for minor emergency repairs, fuel, and routine maintenance that do not exceed \$100. Any repairs, unscheduled maintenance, or towing over \$100 must receive prior approval through the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator, Voluntary Service, or Engineering Service.</p> <p>All credit card purchase receipts must be submitted promptly to the Engineering/Garage Maintenance personnel by the HSC.</p> <p>A government credit card will be used for purchase of gasoline. Be sure the station will accept the card prior to filling with fuel. If they do not and you have filled the tank, pay for the fuel and bring your receipt to the Engineering/Garage maintenance personnel for reimbursement. If there are problems paying for the fuel with the credit card, there is a toll free number on the reverse of the card that can be called to receive authorization to pay for the fuel. Be sure the mileage is put on all receipts. Use only unleaded gasoline (self-serve if possible).</p> <p>If the vehicle needs to be washed, please get the minimum costing car wash, or wash and vacuum it at one of the “do-it-yourself” places.</p> <p>Keep the gas tank filled so the vehicle is ready for the next trip. When you are driving the vehicle, it is your responsibility to be sure fluid levels and tire pressure is adequate.</p>
<p><b>Instructions For Completing</b></p>	<p>The Motor Vehicle Trip Log must be kept for each day the van is in use. This log enables the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator to keep accurate records of DAV driver activities. Additionally, Engineering Service utilizes the information posted on the form to record mileage, fuel costs, and repairs for each DAV van.</p> <p>All DAV van drivers must complete the required information on this</p>

## The Motor Vehicle Trip Log



form each time they drive the van. Items requested on the form are as follows:

### Driver name

Official Purpose: FM (from) City to VAMC; VAMC to City.

Number of Passengers: Number of passengers to the medical center and/or number returned to the pick-up points.

Time: Begin with time you picked up the van; conclude with time you returned to and parked the van at the end of your tour.

Day: Calendar day you are driving.

Hours & Minutes: Hours and minutes are figured from the time you picked up the van until the time you returned it.

Odometer Reading: **Out** is the mileage when you pick up the van; **In** is the mileage on the van when you park it at the conclusion of your trip.

Total Miles Driven on Trip: Subtract Miles Out from Miles In to get the total.

Cost and Care For: Record the cost of fuel and the number of gallons purchased. Minor repair costs may be written either on the next line or in the margin on the same line when the log is completed, it can be submitted to the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.

## USING THE VOYAGER CREDIT CARD

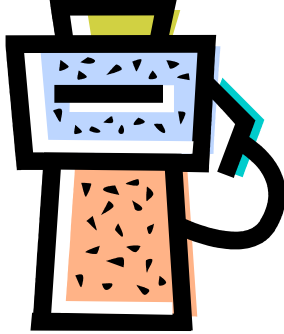
NOTE: Not all service stations accept the government fleet credit card. Be sure to ask about their acceptance policy **BEFORE** pumping gas or having any other service done.

If the gas station has card readers located at the pump, you may use your Voyager card at the pump. If there are no pump card readers, see the attendant inside to process your transaction.

Swipe your card at the pump card reader. If the pump card reader will not accept the card, take the card inside to the attendant and have him/her attempt to process the transaction electronically on the inside equipment.

If the pump terminal requires you to choose either "Credit" or "Debit", press the Credit key. If required, the terminal may prompt for an ID or PIN number. Enter the number at the bottom left-hand side of the card.

If the card cannot be read on any of the equipment, notify Voyager at the number shown on the back of your Voyager card. Voyager will notify the oil company of a problem at one of its locations. The company is often



not aware that a problem exists.

If the sale is processed manually, write ID# and odometer reading on the ticket. If your card cannot be read electronically at any location, it is likely that the magnetic strip is damaged. If this occurs, notify your hospital coordinator to get a replacement card.

If the attendant at the gas station has any questions, provide him/her with the toll-free number on the back of the Voyager card for assistance in processing the transaction.

## **Reporting a Motor Vehicle Accident**



If you are involved in an automobile accident, you must report the accident immediately to the highway patrol or city police by calling 911 and giving them your location. Check for injured personnel. At the earliest convenience, notify the DAV HSC at 843-789-7303, the Chief of Voluntary Service at 843-789-7488, and the VA Police at 843-789-7251, to report the incident.


You must cooperate with law enforcement. You will be asked to provide the VA with a statement regarding the accident and you may be asked to complete necessary paperwork. Your driver's license must be current and you must have been driving within the scope of your assignments for federal coverage to be effective. Vehicle Registration and proof of government insurance is located in the vehicle.

The VA will obtain a copy of the highway patrol or police report shortly after the accident. Any citation received as a result of the accident or while operating the DAV van will be your responsibility.

Information regarding accident procedures is located in the van. Also included is an Accident Report form and witness statements. You will be asked to provide the VA with a statement about the accident and information on the other individual(s) involved. Depending on the severity of the accident, VA staff will advise on whether you will need to complete the Accident Report form.

The Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) applies to you (an approved VA volunteer) in the same manner it does to all employees of the VA. VA volunteers driving a VA vehicle (and that includes DAV vans) in the scope of government business (transporting Veterans to and from the VA for care) are covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

The FTCA protects you from being sued for an act or omission while "in the scope and course of your employment"—even if you are at fault.

	<p>This means that if any claim/lawsuits are brought against you (for example: as a result of an accident), the VA will handle the case, including paying any damages.</p> <p>If you are contacted concerning a claim against you, you should immediately contact the Regional Council's Office or Voluntary Service.</p> <p>In the event you are injured by your actions, the FTCA may not apply. There are other regulations that may deal with these actions. What you could recover will depend on the specific facts, but generally they are the same regulations that apply to all VA employees, whether for compensation or without.</p> <p>Also located in the van is a statement regarding proof of government insurance. Show the statement to the law enforcement officer. You do not need to provide personal proof of insurance cards while driving a government vehicle.</p>
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*We want your volunteer experience at this VA Medical Center to be a positive, rewarding and fulfilling one. You are a valuable part of our effort to provide quality care to our veteran patients.*

*Thank you for the service you provide for the Veterans who come to the VA Medical Center for care. You are appreciated by Veterans and staff alike.*

#### FAQs

**Question:** Is there any protection for a DAV Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteer who is involved in an accident and has a claim filed against him or her?

**Answer:** The Federal government will protect a VAVS volunteer against liability claims under a law known as Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA), provided certain conditions have been met.

**Question:** What conditions must be satisfied in order for a VAVS volunteer to be covered under the provisions of the FTCA?

**Answer:** The volunteer must be a documented VAVS volunteer. The VA has determined that VAVS volunteers will be protected as Federal employees under the FTCA as long as they are performing a specific "VAVS approved assignment." If a VAVS volunteer is not performing a specific "VAVS approved assignment," but is on a non-VA mission or errand, coverage would not be available under FTCA.

**Question:** What is a "VAVS approved assignment?"

**Answer:** A “VAVS approved assignment” is a VA sanctioned, VAVS activity authorized by the Chief of VAVS or by the DAV HSC, who has a without compensation (WOC) appointment and has been delegated responsibility for this function by the VA.

**Question:** When would a VAVS volunteer not be considered to be performing a “VAVS approved assignment” and, therefore, not protected by the FTCA?

**Answer:** If it is determined that a VAVS volunteer was not engaged in official government business at the time of the accident, FTCA coverage will not be available to the VAVS volunteer.

**Question:** What are some instances where a VAVS volunteer would not be protected under the FTCA for a negligent act because he was not acting within the scope of his “assignment?”

**Answer:** If a VAVS volunteer deviates from the specific “VAVS approved assignment” of a transportation route to run an errand, makes a side trip to visit someone, engages in any activity primarily for personal profit, or is driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol, it is most unlikely that the FTCA would cover such negligent acts in these or similar situations (i.e. speeding, driving recklessly, etc.). The US Department of Justice makes the final determination.

**Question:** Suppose the VAVS volunteer, while on a “VAVS approved assignment,” is asked by the Veteran to run an errand for the Veteran or a member of the Veteran’s family, such as buying groceries or going to the Post Office to pick up mail?

**Answer:** If VAVS volunteers do not want to risk losing liability protection under the FTCA, they should decline to run errands not a part of their “VAVS approved assignment.”

**Question:** In transporting a Veteran to and from a VA medical facility, which route should transportation VAVS volunteer use?

**Answer:** The VAVS volunteer should take the most direct route, unless the transportation assignment directs otherwise.

**Question:** How can VAVS volunteers ensure that the protections provided by the FTCA will be available to them?

**Answer:** By following their specific written “VAVS approved assignment” and by restricting their activities to carrying out that assignment.

**Question:** Should a VAVS volunteer continue to carry personal liability insurance to cover a situation where the VAVS volunteer might not be given the protection of the FTCA?

**Answer:** Yes, it is always a good idea for VAVS volunteers to carry personal liability insurance to cover all of their personal driving needs, including time spent engaged in DAV transportation Network activities. This is especially so since the final decision as to whether the protection of FTCA applies is made by the Department of Justice and the courts. Volunteers should check with their insurance agent to be certain that adequate coverage will be provided by their individual insurance policies should the need arise.

**Question:** Is a VAVS volunteer entitled to compensation in the event of injury or death while on a “VAVS approved assignment?”

**Answer:** Under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), a VAVS volunteer is entitled to compensation and medical services for personal injury or death incident to the

VAVS volunteer's assignment. However, the benefits of this Act are only available to VAVS volunteers who are determined to be on official government business as a VAVS volunteer.

**Question: Is a VAVS volunteer entitled to compensation for damage to his privately owned vehicle while on a "VAVS approved assignment?"**

**Answer:** Under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, a VAVS volunteer may file a claim up to \$40,000 for any property damage which was incident to the VAVS volunteer's service. However, no such claim will be paid if the VAVS volunteer was not on official government business when the accident occurred, or the VAVS volunteer was negligent, or was paid directly by another party for the property damage. The VA will only pay amounts not covered by an individual's private insurance. A claim under this Act must be filed within two years of the accident.

**Question: What steps should be taken by a VAVS volunteer if involved in an accident while on a "VAVS approved assignment?"**

**Answer:** The VAVS volunteer should assist any Veteran or other injured party in obtaining any necessary first aid or medical attention. Also, regardless of who may be at fault, the VAVS volunteer should promptly notify the DAV Hospital Service Coordinator and appropriate VA personnel of the accident, furnishing a written report (SF91) to them containing the full details and circumstances of the accident.

**Question: What information or advice should a VAVS volunteer give to any of the parties involved in any such accident?**

**Answer:** The VAVS volunteer should not give any information except that which may be required by state law. No legal advice, opinions or any other type of statement should be given. Otherwise, not only could the legal interests of the VAVS volunteer be seriously jeopardized, but also those of the VA and the DAV. The volunteer should, however, identify himself or herself as a VAVS volunteer.





ATTACHMENT 4

## **VAN DAILY INSPECTION SHEET**

Vehicle License Plate Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Conduct daily inspections of vehicle prior to setting out on your daily pick-up. This form will be turned in every Monday to HSC office. If there is a problem or concerns turn in immediately.

VAN: \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Ok	Defective	Note Concerns
Fire Extinguisher								
Brakes								
Lights								
Seatbelts								
Wipers								
Windshield Fluid								
SF-91 (Accident Report)								
First Aid Kit (Complete)								
Vehicle Damage								
Tires								
Turn Signals								
Emergency Flasher								
Horn								
Leaks under Vehicle								
Telephone								
Other								

If there is mechanical problem with the Van on the way report ASAP

Person Conducting Inspection:

\_\_\_\_\_

